The Melville Society NEWSLETTER

WINTER, 1957

Volume XIII Number 4

For the first time in its thirteen-year history, the Society finds itself vis-a-vis a temporary emergency, the chief difficulty of which lies in the confusion it may cause for our members. This is not a financial emergency, for the budget remains in good shape. Perhaps the question can be described as an "emergency of addresses." Howard C. Horsford, newly elected secretary of the Society, whose active term was to have begun in January (1958), explains the matter in the following letter addressed to all members:

"At the September meeting of the Society I agreed to stand for the office of secretary so that Tyrus Hillway might have a well deserved relief. However, since then events have made it probable that I shall be out of the country all next year. Under the circumstances Mr. Hillway has most generously agreed to the request of the Executive Committee to continue as Secretary until other arrangements can be made to give him his freedom. I have forwarded to him all correspondence and dues payments which have come to me, and for all the work he continues to take on, both the Society and I are deeply grateful."

The action of the Executive Committee, as explained above, has been to appoint Tyrus Hillway as acting secretary until further notice. He has asked to be relieved at the earliest opportunity, but for the time being all correspondence relating to the Society should be addressed to him at the Colorado State College, (Greeley, Colo.), and payment of dues should be made to him as well. Any checks or correspondence mailed to Howard Horsford at Princeton will be forwarded to the acting secretary.

The indulgence of members during this temporary emergency is confidently requested. They may have to expect some delay in replies to their letters, though every effort will be made to maintain a reasonable schedule of correspondence. As soon as the Executive Committee has been able to make other suitable arrangements, an immediate announcement of them will be forthcoming.

This appears an opportune moment for describing the work of the secretary as it has been developing during the past few years. In addition to responsibility for editing our quarterly *Newsletter*, the secretary has had the agreeable burden of a considerable volume of correspondence with Melville scholars and enthusiasts in all parts of the world. Letters arrive in almost each day's mail not only from our members, who write to send information or to make inquiries, but also from persons interested in knowing about the Society and its functions, from students who are engaged in Melville studies, from book collectors, from book dealers, from curious laymen who want to know more about Melville (Did he write anything besides *Moby-Dick?*), and from scores of others. The volume of correspondence has increased gradually until it now occupies at least several hours of every week. Most members probably have no way of knowing that the influence of the Society is out of all proportion to the size of its membership.

Since, in addition to carrying on the above duties as best he could, the present acting secretary has been teaching a full schedule of classes, writing a number of books and articles, and vainly trying to find the time for work on a new biography of Melville, he had been looking forward to completing his thirteen years of service to the Society with the current issue of the *Newsletter*. He had been aware also that new leadership and new ideas are constantly needed in an organization of this kind. He was particularly pleased with the election of Howard Horsford, one of a "new generation" of able and vigorous Melville scholars, as our new secretary. Under the present circumstances (which he trusts will be short in their duration), the acting secretary carries on his duties until relieved, knowing that our members will prove as understanding and cooperative during this temporary emergency as they have always been in the past.

FINANCIAL REPORT — 1957

It may be observed that a further duty of the secretary—one which was not mentioned above—is to serve as business manager and custodian of the funds. As this issue goes to press, the Society has on deposit in the Greeley (Colo.) National Bank the sum of $100.11. From the report of the past year's transactions which is given below, it will be seen that the financial position of the organization has improved substantially as compared with that of the previous year.

The report here presented is for the calendar year 1957, and the cash balance is for December 31 of that year.

On hand, Jan. 1, 1957	$ 52.64
Dues and subscriptions	169.00
Bank interest	1.59
TOTAL	$223.23
Printing expense	$ 84.60
Postage	35.25
Supplies	18.45
TOTAL EXPENSE	$138.30
Balance at end of 1957	$ 84.93

NOTES

The Coxe-Chapman version of *Billy Budd* was presented by the Speech and Drama department of the Catholic University of America in Washington on the evenings of October 25 through November 9. Richard Krisher, Nicholas Bedessem, and Christopher Kotschnig were the principals.

Tentative arrangements for the 1958 annual meeting of the Society have been incorporated in the convention schedule of the Modern Language Association. According to this schedule, the Hartford Room at the Hotel Statler in New York City has been reserved for us at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday, December 28. Suggestions for the program should be addressed to our president, Wilson L. Heflin, at the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.

A search for the logbook of Melville's whaling ship, the *Acushnet*, provided the spark for the writing of a new novel entitled *The New England Story*, by Henry Beetle Hough (New York: Random House, $3.95). Originally, the story was to have been similar to the famous "Aspern Papers" of Henry James. As finally written, the novel concerns the efforts of a young New York researcher to investigate the life of a "Captain Enoch Adams," who strongly resembles Captain Valentine Pease of the *Acushnet*. Adams, according to the story, had once made a voyage with a certain "Archer Templeton" (later the author of a whaling classic) as a member of his crew. Templeton, of course, represents Herman Melville. Members are forewarned, however, that this is *not* a novel about Melville—nor, for that matter, about Captain Pease.

Kenneth A. Lohf and Eugene Sheehy, both of the Columbia University Libraries, are interested in doing a full-dress bibliography of Melville. This would be roughly similar to their *Joseph Conrad at Mid-Century*, published by the University of Minnesota Press. It would supply the need for a somewhat more extensive reference work than the forthcoming check-list bibliography of Hayford anl Roper.

Members who have not forwarded their dues for 1958 (which includes most of us, at this point) are reminded that the amount remains two dollars for active membership and one dollar for associate membership. Checks may be made out to the Melville Society and mailed to the acting secretary, Tyrus Hillway, Colorado State College, Greeley, Colo.

THE *Melville Society* NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE Melville Society, a group of literary scholars and others interested in the life and works of Herman Melville. The Society seeks to facilitate the exchange of information among its members, to stimulate the study of Melville's life and works, and to encourage literary, historical, and bibliographical research. Membership is two dollars per year and includes all services of the Society. Associate membership (non-voting) is one dollar per year and includes all issues of the Newsletter. Address Tyrus Hillway, secretary, at Colorado State College, Greeley, Colorado.